WLW
CINCINNATI

FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

1:15
P.M.- E.S.T.

A SERIES OF DRAMATIZATIONS OF BETTER LAND USE.

No. 163 "THE MOUNTAIN PARSON" June 7, 1941

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

VOICE

We took it for granted that land was everlasting;

We said ownership of the land insured security.

Tools would wear out, men would die --

But the land would remain.

ORGAN: ABRUPT DISCORD.

ANNOUNCER (cold)

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

The Old North State, the Turpentine State, Land of the Tarheels -- that is North Carolina. North Carolina, rich in legends and rich in lore of yesteryear, is fragrant with the breath of the soil, a land of isolated mountains and sheltered coves, bright-leaf tobaccolands tanned by the sun and swept by the wind, a land of shadowy thickets and shifting sands, a land...

ORGAN SEGUE INTO CAROLINA MUSIC...

NARRATOR

Here, men in the mountains arise in the morning,
They greet the sun, breathe the fresh air,
Till the soil, make life worth living;
Here, grass is green.
Here, spring winds lull the roses and the meadowlark --
This -- the hills of North Carolina -- this, my home.

ORGAN: SEGUE BACK TO DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

The mountain belt of Western North Carolina is a high plateau between the Blue Ridge and the Great Smoky Mountains. Between these ridges the plateau is dissected by river valleys running in all directions -- and in the midst of them is Madison County, wherein dwell men from Mars Hill, Shelton Laurels, and Devils Fork -- the scene of the 163rd consecutive episode of Fortunes Washed Away.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

Far from the mountains of North Carolina is the Kansas county of Riley, the city of Manhattan, home of Kansas State College, one of the great agricultural colleges of these United States of America. Manhattan is in the land where...

ORGAN: (Softly) KANSAS MUSIC.

NARRATOR

Here, the narrow black bottomlands of the Kaw
Reach out to the rolling bluestem hills;
Tinted rich green, or hazy blue,
With the changing seasons.
Here, whiteface cattle browse and fatten
On the lush green pastures of Kansas.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

More than twenty years ago, two young Kansas State seniors were looking forward to graduation day. Their caps and gowns had been ordered, their final examinations passed -- and they had just been married. They were Louis and Juanita Zimmerman, and as they rejoiced, there came a phone call...a call that was to mean their future...(FADE).

JUANITA

And so a farmer's wife I'll be.

ZIMMERMAN

Sorry?

JUANITA

Of course not, silly.

ZIMMERMAN

I don't know where we'll be, but...

JUANITA

We'll be with each other.

ZIMMERMAN

And that means all the world to me, Juanita. And we'll....

SOUND: Telephone rings...

ZIMMERMAN

Now who could that be? Well, I'll soon...

JUANITA

I'll answer it, Louie.

SOUND: Telephone receiver lifted...

JUANITA

Hello? Yes...it's for you, Louie.

ZIMMERMAN

All right. Hello?

WILSON (filter mike)

Louie Zimmerman?

ZIMMERMAN

Yes.

WILSON

You're wanted in the dean's office right away.

ZIMMERMAN

In the dean's office ?

WILSON

Yes. Right away.

ZIMMERMAN

Oh. (CHANGING TO SUSPICION) What is this, a gag?

WILSON

No, it is not. Please come over immediately. Goodbye.

SOUND: Receiver hung up...

JUANITA

What is it ?

ZIMMERMAN

I'm wanted at the dean's office.

JUANITA

Oh..oh...there go two degrees from Kansas State.

(PAUSE)

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

ZIMMERMAN

Oh, I beg your pardon...I thought the dean sent for me.

WILSON

He did -- at my request. You're Louie Zimmerman, aren't you?

ZIMMERMAN

Yes, sir.

WILSON

My name is Warren H. Wilson, moderator of the Presbyterian Church. Professor Call will be back in a moment.

ZIMMERMAN

What's he after me for?

WILSON

Nothing at all, Mr. Zimmerman. I suppose I shouldn't have scared you that way, but -- well, I just wanted to talk to you. He tells me you're one of the honor students in the graduating class, and I need someone like you. How'd you like to become a preacher?

ZIMMERMAN

A preacher?

WILSON

Yes, a preacher -- in North Carolina.

ZIMMERMAN

Excuse me, Mr. Wilson, but I'm afraid you have the wrong man. I don't know anything about preaching. All I know is farming.

WILSON

That's why I wanted to talk to you. We have a section over in North Carolina that is strictly rural. We need someone to take over those four parishes who can teach the men how to save their soil, as well as save their souls -- you see, soil salvation and soul salvation in farming areas go hand in hand. You're from Abilene, aren't you?

ZIMMERMAN

Yes.

WILSON

That's a fine farming community. You won't find the same land in Madison County, North Carolina. But you'll find folks that are willing to build up their land, if they're shown how. They're good people. All they want is guidance, both in the spirit of the Lord and in the spirit of agriculture. I think that you're the man who can do it.

ZIMMERMAN

I see.

WILSON

I don't want to rush you, but we must fill that job soon. Won't you think it over and let me know -- right away?

ZIMMERMAN

Mind if I call up my wife?

WILSON

Of course not. There's the Dean's phone.

ZIMMERMAN.

Thanks. No. No, I know that Juanita would go with me, work with me -- and farm and preach with me. Mr. Wilson, I'm just a farm boy -- but I'll take your offer.

ORGAN: CAROLINA MUSIC

NARRATOR

North Carolina, where tobacco grows,

Where peanuts and sweet potatoes, cotton and corn

Mix with the spinning wheels and the looms --

Where blue smoke pours from the clay-chinked log huts --

Where the land meets the sky

And the rain hits hard, hard, against the soil

Is North Carolina.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

SOUND: Automobile chugging to halt....Radiator boiling....

GLEEP

Well, now, here now, I'll just fix that up. Kinda hot ain't it, mister...

ZIMMERMAN

Yes, it's....

GLEEP

Not used to running up and down these mountains, I can tell that. Just needs some water. You ought to see this -- you're a stranger around here, I can tell by your license plates -- my name's Gleep, Joe Gleep -- well, sir, you ought to go over by this spring down the road half a mile or so, but I'll fix you up.

ZIMMERMAN

Thanks. What spring is that?

GLEEP

Yessir, I knew you was a stranger, you and the missus. Why, that spring gushes forth enough water to make a small river. Folks say it was caused a long time ago by the tears from a Cherokee princess -- she was locked up in a cave by her paw because she wouldn't marry the chief he'd picked out. Kansas, huh?

ZIMMERMAN

Yes, we're from Kansas, but we'd planned to...

GLEEP

What part of Kansas -- cattle country?

JUANITA

Oh, no...Abilene.

ZIMMERMAN

Yes, Abilene -- in Dickinson County, some of the best land in the state.

GLEEP

Well sir, I'm glad to hear that. They tell me that some places out there a man no sooner plants his feet on the ground than a rattlesnake strikes and along comes a whirlwind and blows the land right out from under him.

JUANITA

Oh, that's not so! If you take care of the land, it'll be all right with you.

ZIMMERMAN

That's right, my friend. The sun, the wind, and the rain do what they want to with us. But after they hit the ground, we can be their masters. We can control them -- after they hit the ground.

GLEEP

Say! You sound just like a preacher.

ZIMMERMAN

I guess I'd better. I'm going to be one.

ORGAN: CAROLINA MUSIC

NARRATOR

North Carolina -- cotton plantations shimmering in the sun,

Yellow pine forests reaching toward the sky;

Black bass and speckled trout leaping through the cool clear mountain rivulets

Men and mules, mules and men

Following the curving furrows of the good rich earth.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

SOUND: Automobile chugging to halt...radiator boiling....

GLEEP (fading in)

Just a minute, parson, I'll get it. Better let the engine cool down first.

ZIMMERMAN

Guess I better.

GLEEP

No use bustin' the block. Say, what's this I hear about you buying a farm up by Devils Fork?

ZIMMERMAN

That's right, Joe. I did. Not much of a farm, is it?

GLEEP

It sure ain't, and I wish you'd spoke to me before you done it. Why, that land is so pore a dozen Kansas farmers couldn't raise old Ned on it.

ZIMMERMAN

You see to know all about farming in these parts.

GLEEP

I ought to. I've already ruined three farms. And I know the people. Take Old Man Monk over there -- he's so lazy he waits for a tornado to come along and thresh his wheat for him. Then there's Gus Benson -- you know what he done?

ZIMMERMAN

No....

GLEEP

He trained his hound dog to travel on two legs so's he'd always have the other two legs in reserve in case a fox came along. But he was kind hearted, though -- he wouldn't kill 'tater bugs until they got their bellies full. He just didn't like to kill anything when it's hungry. Big trouble with him was, he drank too much "razor-blade soup".

ZIMMERMAN

Razor-blade soup...oh, I see what you mean. Were you ever a farmer yourself?

GLEEP

Yes indeedy, yes indeedy. Oil's a bit low. See? Was I a farmer? Parson, one time I had a pulling team. I hitched it up to a railroad engine what was out of coal, and the team pulled so hard the track just followed after us, right over to my farm. Man, was that soil fertile. The clover grew so high I had to stand on a fence post to find the cows in it, and the cows didn't give anything but pure cream. (DROPPING ALL PRETENSE). Parson, what's going to come of this land around here? It's all shot to pieces -- it's washing away.

ZIMMERMAN

That's one reason I bought that farm up by Devil's Fork. You know, Joe, that a parish in this hill country doesn't pay, and I've got to make a living -- but more than that, I want to show that farming can pay, if you treat the land right. And next Sunday, if you'll come to the church at Shelton Laurels, Joe, you'll hear what I'm telling you now...

ORGAN: Sneak in CHURCH IN THE VALLEY BY THE WILDWOOD.

ZIMMERMAN

....the church has a manifold position in the country community. Our church should minister to the spiritual and social needs of the family; it should maintain a diversified program to keep our young people happy and contented on the farm; it should be interested not only in soul salvation, but in soil salvation as well. For from the soil of America springs the soul of America, and these are the things that will keep America safe from all evil: its belief in its country, its God; a sturdy national defense to protect it from outsiders, manufacturers and laborers who work hand in hand, farmers who protect the soil -- these will make America safe for Democracy.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

Thus, the Reverend L. A. Zimmerman embarked on a minister's career in rugged Madison County, North Carolina. And to continue the story, we turn once again to the United States Department of Agriculture, and speaking for the Soil Conservation Service is Ewing Jones.

JONES

_____, he's done a marvelous job of farming. You know the Soil Erosion Service -- predecessor of the Soil Conservation Service -- was established in 1933 --

ANNOUNCER

Yes...

JONES

Well, Reverend Zimmerman has practiced strip cropping on his farm since 1919. He's found that strip cropping is one of the best methods for controlling erosion and building up the soil on sloping, cultivated fields. To tell you the truth, that land is hilly -- mighty hilly.

ANNOUNCER

Like that land you and Charley Grisham went to see last week?

JONES

Even more hilly, but not quite so inaccessible. I would liked to have had Arthur Radkey with me -- though he's been with me on other farms. Art Radkey, folks, is the boy behind the glass cage who has directed practically all of these 163 stories of "Fortunes Washed Away", and he's leaving tomorrow, I believe, for his vacation, and this is just to say, Art Radkey, thanks for all you've done and hurry back....Well, back to the Zimmerman farm... he has to grow his corn, tobacco and other row crops on sloping land, because that's the only kind of land he has. In spite of that, he has whipped soil erosion and built up the fertility of his soil through strip cropping.

ANNOUNCER

And that means increased yields.

JONES

His corn crop is one example. When the Reverend moved to the farm, the average corn yield per acre was about 15 bushels. Now he says it's a bad year if he gets less than 50 bushels to the acre.

ANNOUNCER

Well, tell me this, Ewing -- how did he get the idea of strip cropping? He surely never had seen this practice used before.

JONES

Why, _____, just like many another farmer, he worked it out for himself. He knew that anything that would retard the speed of water running down the hillsides would check erosion -- and he knew that grasses, wheat, legumes, and other close-growing crops would give almost perfect control. But -- he couldn't devote his entire acreage to these crops, so he divided his fields into contour strips of meadow alternated with contour strips of row crops. The system worked, just as it works for thousands of other farmers. He's a good example of a live-at-home farmer, _____ and his children are following in his footsteps. He is a good farmer as well as a minister, and America needs more men like the Reverend Mr. L. A. Zimmerman, of Madison County, North Carolina. And now, _____, if you please, the "Eleventh Commandment."

ORGAN: Sneak in DEEP RIVER.

ANNOUNCER

"Thou shall inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

#